1:Radin E-5 (1908-1913) 1923
NP12 Winnebago NP12

CHAPTER IV

GENERAL SOCIAL CUSTOMS

843 *Birth.*—During pregnancy a woman had to observe carefully certain restrictions. She was not allowed to roam the woods alone for fear of meeting snakes or other animals, the sight of which was believed to forebode ill luck to a pregnant woman. She was not permitted to have dogs or cats around her nor to sleep during the day. Every morning during her pregnancy she had to take a cold bath. Among the restrictions may have been food taboos, but no information on this phase of the subject was obtained.

844 When the time for delivery came, it was the custom for the woman to occupy a small lodge erected especially for her use. None of her male relatives were permitted to be present and her husband was not even permitted to stay at home. He was supposed to travel continually until the child was born, in the belief that by his movements he would help his wife in her delivery. According to one informant the husband had to hunt game, the supposition being that this procedure on his part would cause his wife to have enough milk for the child. This traveling of the husband was called, therefore, "Looking-for-milk." It was considered improper for a woman to cry out during labor pains, and by doing so she subjected herself to the [854] jests of her elder female relatives. The cradle-board was always made before the child was born (pls. 41, *c*, 42, *a*).

The positions commonly assumed by women in delivery may be described thus: Supported by the arms, which were passed over a pole held in the crotches of two forked sticks driven into the ground; suspended between two stakes; or flat on the back.

The infant's navel string was cut off and sewed into a small bag, which was attached to the head of the cradle-board.

844 607 On the birth of a child the sisters of the husband were supposed to show his wife especial marks of courtesy. They always gave her valuable gifts, such as goods or a pony. They were glad that he had offspring, the people said, and even permitted their brother's wife [431] to give the presents received from them to her own relatives. The presentation of these gifts was called "Cradling-the-infant." Gifts 844 were presented also to the wife's brothers.

562 527 782 Some time after the birth of a child, if a boy, the father always gave a feast to Earthmaker and thanked him.

1:Radin E-5 (1908-1913) 1923
NP12 Winnebago NP12

825
756 on the earth, have medicines that you are to use on earth. Whatever you say on earth it will be so. You have been blessed with all the things that are on and under the earth."

All the fowls and insects of the air, all the beings that have wings, blessed him and gave him medicines, which he was to mix with other medicines. He was told to make use of all the insects of the earth and air, some of which we never see. All those who live on earth, all the fishes in the water, and all the different kinds of water-spirits blessed him with medicines. He was blessed with, and told to use as medicines, all those plants that live in the water. He was blessed with the leech, one of the animals that lives in the water, and he was to use it in medicine mixing. They say that it is good to mix the leech with other medicines to relieve pain. He was blessed with all the trees, that we see to-day, which he was to use as medicines. Their bark, leaves, and roots are considered very good for such purposes. He was blessed also with all the small undergrowth, whose leaves, bark, inner bark, blossoms, and roots he was to use for medicine. He was blessed with all the weeds, and he was to use their heads and leaves for medicine, but their roots were to be used for other purposes.

Thus all the different kinds of plants that grow on this earth blessed him. The earth also blessed him and said to him, "Grandson, as the other spirits are blessing you, I, also, will bless you. Earthmaker has placed me here, and I therefore bless you with all plants that grow upon me, and all the trees and woods and animals that exist on this earth, and lastly, with life and myself (i. e., earth). You may use me, and especially the blue clay that you derive from me, for medicines. Should you use as medicine all these things with which I have blessed you, especially if you use me, as medicine, you will be able to accomplish all that you attempt.

"If a person who is sick offers you tobacco (i. e., asks you to cure him), remember that I also would like to smoke and that it is for that reason that I have blessed you."[1]

[826] Birds, especially eagles, are used in the making of medicines. The entire body of a raven, including the heart and brains, are used, and also the following snakes: The gray snake; the black snake, the blue snake, the yellow snake, the bull snake, and the snake that breaks itself in two. The rattlesnake is used in a mixture given to women when in labor. If a woman hurts herself during pregnancy and kills the child within her womb, she can be made to deliver the embryo if she uses the medicine mentioned above.

[844 278 845]

[776 782]

[1] According to general belief the spirits are supposed to have entered into a sort of "bargain" with the human beings by which they were to bestow their blessings upon them in exchange for tobacco, buckskin, and feathers. Of course, it must be understood that individuals must have the necessary requirements, such as a certain attitude of mind, fasting, etc., before their offering of tobacco has any meaning to the spirits.

1:Radin E-5 (1908-1913) 1923
NP12 Winnebago NP12

him from killing game. In the particular case mentioned above the spell was the following: A man killed a deer, and a pregnant woman ate a piece of the intestine. From that time on the man was unable to kill any more deer. 755 278 [224 843]

The above medicine is used to break the spell of ill luck in hunting caused by the following actions: If a man cohabits with a widow, or if one who is a widower eats together with another person, or if he smokes out of the same pipe as another person. Not only would the medicine free him from his ill luck in hunting, but it would give him good luck in cards and speed in running. [589]

Here is an astringent medicine. It is compounded of a mixture of the "clear" medicine and the "plant that spreads itself on the ground." It is used for the following purposes: As an application for swellings, for illness after childbirth, and for general sores and eruptions of the skin. In case of illness after childbirth it is injected. For sores, etc., it is taken internally. 757 278 [844]

Here is another medicine, called bladder medicine. It is made of the roots of a certain weed. These roots are boiled and then drunk. If one is troubled with stricture, the drinking of this medicine will enable him to pass water immediately. The same medicine is used to alleviate a toothache and to stop too profuse a menstrual flow. [841]

Now this is another medicine. It is made of the leaves of a certain plant. These leaves are rolled up and then drunk down with water. The medicine is used for all stomach complaints.

Here is another medicine used for diarrhea and dysentery. It is made from the roots of a plant that has many thorns and beautiful white blossoms. The roots are scraped and the scrapings boiled and gulped down. At least a pint of this concoction must be taken. It can also be used as a mouth wash for those troubled with sore mouths.

We have another medicine used to rid a person of superfluous bile. This acts as a strong physic and not only cures a person of his indisposition but also gives him a great appetite.

Here is another medicine. It is called the medicine for burns. It consists of the leaves of a certain weed that is dried. If anyone has a burn, he chews some of this dried weed and then applies it to the burn. [752]

Here is also a medicine for private diseases, compounded of the following:

1. Doxicu'tckera hara, red willow bark.
2. Ma"sixu'tckeda hara, English unknown.
3. Nap'a'hira hara, sharp tree.

These barks are pulverized and mixed together with skunk oil.

The next medicine I am going to describe is used in poisoning. It is called small-part-of-a-black-root-tree. It is used for many pur- 754 278

§1. *Early Childhood*

Father and mother had four children and after I was born. An uncle of my mother named White Cloud spoke to her before I was born and told her, "You are about to give birth to a child who will not be an ordinary individual." These were the words he addressed to her. It was then that my mother gave birth to me. As soon as I was born, indeed as I was being washed—as my neck was being washed—I laughed out loudly.

I have been told [1] that I was a good-tempered child.

During childhood my father told me to fast and I obeyed him. Throughout the winter, every morning, I would get up very early, crush charcoal, and then blacken my face with it. As soon as the sun rose would I go outside and there gazing steadily at the sun, make my prayer to the spirits, crying.[2]

[1] Whenever the writer refers to events that happened before his time or before he could remember things, he always uses the quotative, "it is said."

[2] This refers to the custom of fasting of which many examples will be found later on. Among the Winnebago and many culturally related tribes, every person, male and female, was expected, between the ages of five and twelve, to seek communion with some supernatural spirit and the spirit so obtained was supposed to grant the suppliant certain powers and in general preside over his destinies throughout life. The proper manner of approaching this ordeal was to blacken one's face with charcoal and retire at night to some semi-deserted place at some distance from the house and there pray-